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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this handbook is to guide rural school districts intending to establish a preschool program. The program described was established in the Trimble Local School District in the rural Appalachian area of northern Athens County, the third poorest district in Ohio. Contents concern: (1) the district's beliefs about children; (2) curriculum; (3) parent education; (4) preparation for a preschool program; (5) the program itself; (6) assessment; and (7) the selection of books for children and staff. The curriculum is discussed in terms of the importance of play in the preschool classroom, blocks, reading and language skills, mathematics, art, science, and music and movement. Preparation for the program is discussed in relation to needs assessment, registration, the time line, selection of children to be served, the ratio of children to teacher or aide, and the physical setting and organization of the classroom. Discussed components of the program include the daily schedule, key activities, the role of the aide, parent involvement, and the use of videotapes. Assessment is discussed in terms of assessment of the child, a preschool parent questionnaire, and program improvement. Lists of books of interest and selection criteria are offered. Resources are listed, and an orientation manual, observation form, and questionnaire are provided in appendices. (RH)

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PRESCHOOL GUIDELINES

Rural Model

TRIMBLE LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

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INTRODUCTION

This handbook is presented as a guide for districts intending to establish a preschool program. In using this guide, it is important to understand that each experience in establishing and operating a preschool program will be unique. There is no single correct way to proceed and no detailed blueprint that will fit each situation. Although we may allow our prejudices to creep in at times, there is no single correct philosophy which must ultimately guide every preschool effort in the state. Recent longitudinal studies, however, have identified specific orientations and techniques that do appear to be better than others. The discussion of our philosophy and the bibliography will hopefully provide you with the material that you need to make intelligent decisions for yourselves.

The preschool program described herein was established in the Trimble Local School District. Trimble is the third poorest district in the state, located in a rural Appalachian area of northern Athens County. The district serves roughly 1,200 students in single elementary, middle, and high schools. Despite the obvious poverty of the area, the citizens strongly support the schools. This support was recently evidenced, for instance, in an 80 percent approval vote for a tax levy for construction of a new high school. Many of the children face a physically deprived environment, and the school district serves as a major resource and change agent for them.

We invite you to examine the handbook for its applicability to your situation. Please take time to read the philosophy of the curriculum before examining the array of specific activities and materials. The style of interaction between the children, the teacher, and the aide is probably the most critical factor in the success of a program. Enjoy reviewing the materials described in the bibliography. Take pleasure in designing the ideal preschool for your community.

Feel free to contact us regarding any questions you may have. If you would find it profitable, we may be able to arrange for consultation visits with you regarding the establishment or operation of the preschool. Let us know what we can do to be of assistance to you. We wish you the best of luck in your efforts.

Our Beliefs About Children

Young children are eager, enthusiastic learners who are always actively exploring in an attempt to understand their world. They learn best when they are provided with opportunities to build this new understanding on previously acquired knowledge. As they explore, preschool children need to experience success and see the results of their own actions on the environment. Adults can facilitate children's learning by encouraging their exploration of concrete materials and their active involvement with other children and adults.

Our goal as early childhood educators is to help each child reach his or her full potential physically, socially, emotionally, and intellectually. Our role is to provide children with an environment, experiences, and materials that encourage their overall development.

In order to reach this developmental potential, young children need to learn how to solve real problems, both in the intellectual realm (e.g., how to find out which of two objects weighs more, what happens when one pours water on a hill of sand, what the letters on the page of their favorite book mean) and in the social realm (e.g., how to share toys and other materials; how to divide an apple so everyone gets a piece; how to cope with the death of a relative, friend, or pet; what to do when another child hits or bites them). The teacher's role is to help children effectively deal with and learn from these situations. This is best accomplished when the teacher (1) has established a trusting relationship with the child; (2) has provided a warm, secure atmosphere in the classroom; and (3) is sensitive to the child's viewpoint of the problem.

The critical requirement for establishing a trusting relationship with the child is to be a sensitive and responsive communicator. Clear communication on the part of the teacher, based on a respect for the child, provides a basis for understanding the dialogue, and helps the child build similar skills for herself/himself. Dialogue forms the framework for building the relationship with the child, which in turn lays the foundation for learning.

Like all of us, young children need a structure within which to operate. A few reasonable, clearly defined rules provide children with an understanding of the expected limits and guidelines for their behavior in the classroom. Within the limitations of these rules, children need to be given the chance to make decisions and engage in activities based on their needs and interests. Intellectual and social learning is further enhanced when the teacher models appropriate skills in her/his interactions with the children. By providing children with a secure, yet stimulating environment and clear guidelines for appropriate behavior, sensitive teachers can further facilitate young children's enthusiasm for learning.

The teacher's sensitivity to the child's view of his/her world requires a strong understanding of the developmental process of children. It is important to understand children's cognitive possibilties and limitations. Moreover, it is critical to recognize that children can best master a new intellectual/social skill when it holds interest for them. This requires a recognition of the needs of children as individuals. One child may spend only two minutes with a water table, while another spends two days with it. The sensitivity of the teacher to these differences and the teacher's flexibility in allowing for such individual needs may be key factors in allowing children to reach their full potential and in stirring their educational zeal.

CURRICULUM

The Enacted Curriculum

Traditionally, when considering the curriculum for a program, the focus has been on content. It is necessary, however, to consider not only the content but also the process, that is, what the child and the teacher do with this content. Erickson (1986) refers to this process of engagement with content as the "enacted curriculum."

It is important to view the curriculum as more than just a blueprint for providing the right materials and activities to meet the children's developing needs. When planning a curriculum for young children, it is necessary to consider how the teacher will engage a child in an activity that matches the child's needs and interests and how the teacher will reach out and extend the child's under-

standing beyond the initial point of engagement. In extending the child's understanding, the teacher should present the activity and then adapt it in such a way that the individual child can construct the learning tasks for himself/herself.

The "content" of this program's curriculum is outlined below. Included are a number of suggestions appropriate for four-year-old and five-year-old children. The success of these activities with children in other prekindergarten programs, however, will depend on how well the activities meet the needs and interests of the individual children in those programs. Learning will be enhanced if (1) the activities presented to the children meet their needs and interests; and (2) the teacher is responsive and sensitive, and has the expertise to expand their understanding by building on their personal interests and prior knowledge through extension and elaboration of their ideas.

The Importance of Play in the Preschool Classroom

Play is the young child's major means for exploring the world and the medium in which children learn best (Vygotsky, 1978). Through play, children develop not only physically, but socially, emotionally, and intellectually as well. Jerome Singer concluded that play is beneficial to young children because it provides opportunities for problem solving; learning how to persist at a task; using new vocabulary; and practicing such socioemotional skills as role taking and empathizing, responding to aggression, resolving conflicts, exercising leadership, and being cooperative. The sheer fun children associate with play is strong motivation for every kind of learning and strengthens their resistance to television addiction. A number of researchers (Garvey, 1977; Pelligrini, 1980; Smilansky, 1963) have suggested that play is an important contributor both to children's language acquisition and to their literary development.

Children want to play and they learn from play, but unfortunately play is often discouraged in many preschools. A basic premise of this program's curriculum philosophy is that play is an important element of any preschool program. Children need to be given the chance to play daily, alone and with other children. Materials such as blocks, sand, water, dolls, dress-up clothes, toy vehicles, and miniature animals and people help stimulate children's play. Adult encouragement and involvement, however, are also a critical ingredient for encouraging and enriching play situations.

Children play to learn and, conversely, children must learn to play. Many children come to school not knowing how to engage in extended fantasy play with their peers. Smilansky (1968) has studied such children and indicated that if they are to be able to function well both socially and academically in school settings, they need to learn how to pretend play with others. She also reported that a high proportion of low-achieving children don't know how to engage in fantasy play with their peers. When she trained these children in fantasy play with other children, their school achievement improved. Christie (1982) provided many valuable suggestions for helping children learn to play with others. As previously noted, the teacher needs to be sensitive to the child's play interests and to expand and build on them. Christie cited the block area as an excellent location for stimulating interaction through sociodramatic play activities.

Blocks

Blocks are one example of a curriculum activity that builds on the attraction of play. Blocks have been described as the most important material found in the preschool or kindergarten classroom. They are nonthreatening and provide an excellent alternative material for children who feel uncomfortable with messy materials such as clay and finger paints (Cartwright, 1974). Blocks provide children with opportunities for growth through the wide variety of activities they support, and permit the child to choose to play alone or in a group.

Teachers commonly complain that there is too much antisocial behavior associated with block play. Rogers (1985), however, found that block play with large hollow blocks and unit blocks was far more likely to stimulate prosocial rather than antisocial behavior among kindergarten children. Children very seldom threw blocks. Neither did they use blocks to threaten or initiate violence. There was almost no crying or screaming, and the children never engaged in physical fights. Prosocial behavior is most likely to occur in block play if an adequate supply of blocks and sufficient space to build are provided. Literature on the use of blocks suggests that about 500-700 unit blocks and 70 large blocks be available for an average preschool or kindergarten class (Hirsch, 1984). It may also be necessary for teachers to ensure that girls have equal access to the block area, as well as encouragement and modeling, since social/sexual stereotypes often portray these activities as predominately male oriented.

Blocks seem to provide a forum that gently promotes group-play situations, while allowing the socially immature child the opportunity to participate near other children in a parallel fashion. Group play offers children the opportunity

to develop and practice social skills through interpersonal interaction, while parallel play affords children the chance to acquire appropriate social skills through observation and imitation.

In addition to encouraging social development, blocks may also stimulate cognitive development by providing many opportunities for problem solving; decision making; exploring vertical, horizontal, and enclosed space; and experiencing part-whole, length-width, and size-weight relationships. Block building promotes hand-eye coordination, balance, and the ability to focus in a close visual field. After completing their block structures, children gain the satisfaction of seeing the constructive results fo their own efforts. Because of the nature of blocks, there is little chance for failure; every child can construct something. Children who may have little success in other areas can succeed with blocks and thus facilitate the development of their self-esteem.

Reading and Language Skills

This portion of the curriculum was, without question, a cornerstone of the program. It was based on a language-experience and literature-based design. This combination provides for learning that proceeds from the known to the unknown, from the child's oral language and familiar cherished story tests to printed symbols which preserve this language and allow it to be communicated reliably. It links the child's oral language and meaningful texts with printed symbols, so that the latter take on meaning for the child. It emphasizes the important of reading so that it is actively sought out by the child. It supports the child's independent reading and writing activity, which in turn encourages hypothesis formation and testing. This curriculum provides specific skill learning in reading and writing as those skills are needed by the child. Thus, skills are acquired as they are needed, rather that before they can be effectively used. This allows the child to perceive wholes first and then gradually to learn to discriminate parts, proceeding from sight recognition of meaningful words to word analysis skills. These skills emerge as known words are compared and contrasted with each other and with unknown words, and letter/sound correspondences are noted and analyzed.

The language-experience approach to reading uses the child's own language as the basis for reading. Stories are dictated to parents, teacher, or aide. Each child builds a bank of word cards, with words important to the child written on them. These stories and word cards, as well as labels and signs around the room, provide the words to be read, written, and analyzed.

A literature-based approach is meaning and process centered rather than word centered. It is characterized by an immersion in good literature that promotes reading readiness, and allows a gradual transition from reading-like behavior to reading behavior. As Holdaway (1982) noted, this technique rewards approximation, supporting the early development of predictive and self-corrective strategies that are crucial to healthy language use. The availability of many good books in the classroom, repeated readings of favorite books by adults so that children can learn the stories (often word for word), and the chance for children to choose books to take home whenever they wish are valuable elements for a prekindergarten program.

Mathematics

The mathematics approach used in this program employed a manipulative, action-oriented curriculum. It seems clear that in many cases, children can memorize correct answers in mathematics, without having any genuine understanding of the underlying abstract concepts. Children may be able to learn to count from 1 to 100, yet not have any understanding of how many objects 100 actually is. The manipulative, action-oriented approach involves the use of real materials, physically manipulated by the child. Maffei and Buckley (1982) identify six categories of mathematics skills that are acquired through this approach. (1) Classification or sorting enables the child to begin to understand the concepts of sets, likenesses and differences, and hence, subsets. (2) Ordering helps the child to understand more deeply the interrelationships of objects by organizing materials according to size, time, and number, and by discovering and continuing patterns, etc. (3) Rational counting, that is, the counting of actual objects, may come more slowly than rote counting, but is also a more substantial intellectual achievement. The child learns one-to-one correspondence, then begins to recognize the number of objects in sets. (4) Subsequently, the child will learn the use of numbers, distinguishing cardinal and ordinal numbers. (5) Only after understanding the concept and uses of numbers does the child begin to grasp the importance of

those abstract symbols known as numerals. (6) The final stage discussed by Maffei and Buckley is the application of these concepts to geometric figures.

Art

"It may be that one of the basic abilities that should be taught in our public schools is the ability to discover and to search for answers instead of passively waiting for answers and directions from the teacher" (Lowenfeld & Brittain, 1975, p.4). Art gives young children the opportunity to discover and to search for answers while simultaneously providing them a means for expression. Art also encourages problem solving and decision making, and small-motor control. It has the potential for promoting the development of self-esteem by providing an alternative means of self-expression, particularly for children who have difficulty communicating through language.

But what is art for young children? According to Henderson (1970),

> The art experience for young children does, quite often, make use of crayons or paint and paper. But it can also be the child's reaction to the sensory experience of touching, feeling, seeing, tasting, and listening. It is the experience of riding a bike through the sand and discovering large patterns being formed. It is building with blocks and spools and tubes, to create the many shapes and forms, houses and boats, people and animals that make up a child's world. It is the changing beat of a stick hitting the boards of a fence as a child walks down the street. Art is sharing feelings and experiences. (p. 1)

If one wishes to stimulate creativity, communication, and self-expression, then art for young children should not be teacher modeled or patterned activities, like the identical Halloween jack-o-lanterns, Thanksgiving turkeys, or Easter bunnies that line the classroom walls before each of these holidays. Art for young children should not be coloring in a coloring book or filling in a ditto sheet. Art should not be doing a different activity everyday. Teacher-modeled and patterned activities do not give each child a chance to create something that is uniquely his/hers. Coloring books and dittos do not provide the means for self-expression. Too many difficult activities do not encourage children to

explore and become competent with a few carefully chosen media. Art needs to help each child gain a new perspective on, and thus a better understanding of, his/her world. Art activities, like those described above by Henderson, give children the opportunity to build on what they know by providing them with plenty of time, materials, and sensitive guidance and encouragement, to create or experience according to their own interests, ideas, and capabilities. The activities are well suited for young children and will foster their overall development.

Science

Science, like art, can help young children see the world from a different perspective. Science can provide preschool children with a new awareness of the world around them by refining their observational skills and encouraging them to make comparisons between different materials and events. As early childhood educators, we must expand our own limited view of what science is and facilitate young children's natural curiosity. Holt (1977) defines science and explains its importance in helping children learn about their world and learn how to learn.

With young children, science is continuous wondering, finding out, knowing. Science is thinking and doing and making the two go together. The raw materials and events of science are all around, at home, in the yard, and in early childhood and primary centers and schools. Science for young children is catching an insect in a jar, watching it, and feeling the importance of letting it go. It is playing in dishwater with a measuring cup. It is wearing a coat in winter and considering why it is warmer that way. It is seeing how crabs and spiders are alike. Most children discover the materials skillfully. Most are delighted participants in the events. Making a science experience out of a find or happening may require the sensitivity and hard work of an adult. (p. 2)

Music and Movement

The exploration of sounds, rhythms, and body movements is very natural in children, and is closely related to art and science activities. Early in infancy, children actively respond to sounds and rhythms. They quickly begin to distinguish the pitch and timbre of different people's voices, and differentiate between the different moods expressed by changes in one's voice. They try to imitate the

sounds made by people speaking to them. The experience of music and movement in the prekindergarten classroom permits the child to develop skills related to music, to be sure, but it also provides a very popular opportunity for group interaction, teamwork, and an alternate means of emotional exploration and expression.

Children's interest in sound and rhythm probably receives more stimulation now than it did in the past. Many preschool children have their own radio or cassette player/recorder, with which they listen to music throughout the day. Music abounds around them, in muzak machines, on television shows (MTV!) and commercials, in video games, and even in the small inexpensive electronic keyboards, which have become so popular. The advent of the Suzuki method of instrumental instruction has made it possible for many three-year-old and four-year-old children to play pianos, violins, cellos, and even harps!

Three areas of musical skills can be identified as targets for children at this development level (Brand & Fernie, 1983). Vocal development can be encouraged by singing in the classroom. Teachers often protest that they are not outstanding vocalists, but children are usually beautifully unconcerned about having a professional-sounding vocalist for a teacher. To be effective, songs need to have a relatively narrow range of notes, be relatively short, be highly repetitive, and have a clear rhythm. Songs are learned more effectively through simple repetition than through drills; drills, in fact, are probably one of the most effective techniques for restraining music enthusiasm at this age. Songs which involve the children's names hold particular interest for them.

While a large number of children's songs have become popular in early childhood education, it is profitable to screen songs' contents for racial, sexual, and ethnic stereotypes, and for inappropriate social lessons. "Who stole the cookie from the cookie jar?" for instance, is a name song which is quite popular with children, has a restricted range of notes, simple and repetitious phrases, and a strong rhythm, but involves alternately falsely accusing children of stealing, and often leads the final child to confess proudly of theft and dishonesty!

Instrumental skills initially involve the ability to recognize and discriminate sound patterns. This may be achieved by the use of sound boxes, which the child uses to try to identify or match sounds, and by the use of games

in which children say things in a very high/low/loud/soft voice. Once the child has begun to develop skills in sound and pattern recognition, discrimination, and production, the use of instruments can build on these skills. Traditional preschool instruments, including rhythm instruments, xylophones, and even pianos, can help children to explore rhythm and pitch patterns further in songs sung in the classroom or played on classroom recorders and record players.

Music Appreciation involves exposing the children to a wide variety of styles of music for their listening pleasure. The music can also be used in the learning of rhythm skills as noted above and in setting the desired tone for an activity or period in the classroom. Children will naturally tend to begin moving to the music. Their movements, if permitted and/or encouraged, can lead to a rich experience of emotional expression and socio-dramatic play. When possible, the experience of listening to live musicians can greatly enrich children's musical development.

PARENT EDUCATION

While a prekindergarten child may be in school for 15 hours per week, the great majority of his/her week is spent in the home environment. The learning experience of the school program can be greatly enhanced if parents are provided with training in complementary activities in the home. This is not to suggest that parents should begin to function like classroom teachers. Indeed, such an interference in the parent-child relationship may be damaging and, thus, should be avoided. Parents are, however, constantly teaching their children, and a relatively small amount of training can help parents channel that teaching in constructive directions. Parents can be encouraged, for instance, to read more frequently to their children, to be selective in the television programs watched in the home, to permit the child to make more decisions for herself/himself, to accept responsibility, etc.

PREPARING FOR A PRESCHOOL PROGRAM

Needs Assessment

To determine the public interest in a preschool program, the program administrator needs to develop a means of identifying eligible children and of determining parental interest/motivation for enrolling their children. Some

factors which may have an influence on how the program is operated include the following:

1) What are the selection criteria? Considerations include age, educational need, availability of transportation, ability of parents to pay costs, etc.
2) How will the program be funded? Possibilities include competitive grants, charitable foundations, parent contributions, volunteer services, grants from employers of the parents, etc. (At the time of this writing, Ohio law prohibits boards of education from directly funding preschool programs.)
3) What was the initial reason for establishing the preschool? Does the interest arise from parents seeking jobs and searching for a care facility for their children, from parents simply wishing to enrich their child's preschool experience, from researchers trying to stimulate early childhood development?

Once the factors that may influence the preschool program have been determined, a questionnaire for the parents and an assessment battery for the children, if appropriate, can be developed.

Registration

A variety of techniques are used in the Trimble Local School District to inform the public about the registration day, including local newspapers, cable TV public service announcements, local radio stations, storefront posters, and notices sent home with schoolchildren. Notices are typically given twice -- once well in advance of the date and once shortly before the registration date.

The registration itself coincides with the kindergarten registration. This results in an effective use of personnel for distributing forms, administering assessment batteries, answering questions, etc. Parents call for an appointment, and are sent (or pick up) information sheets detailing what documents need to be brought, what time to arrive, and the approximate amount of time that will be required. Times were preassigned on the basis of the first letter of the last name. Babysitting services may be extremely helpful, and parent volunteers can greatly facilitate the overall operations. It may, however, be profitable to determine your district's liability coverage before initiating such involvement. Copies of Trimble's preschool questionnaire, information sheet, and kindergarten handbook are included in Appendix A.

Time Line

A basic rule of thumb in establishing timetables when working in communities is to calculate the estimated time required as liberally and as carefully as possible. Then double it. Because of the rigid schedule for establishing these model programs, it was necessary to assemble the advisory board very quickly. Although this was accomplished, there are serious questions as to whether such a group could be assembled as quickly again. Moreover, placing such demands on community agencies may damage community relations. Therefore, you are encouraged to follow a reasonable time line in dealing with any community contacts or agencies. The board consisted of the school principal, the teacher, aide, educational consultant, psychological consultant, the district's Chapter 1 kindergarten director, the school's Title 1 prekindergarten teacher, Head Start representatives, several parents, and at times the county superintendent and other early childhood professionals. The assembly of representatives of various community agencies can provide invaluable information and prevent the wasteful duplication of services.

Each district will face different time lines in hiring a teacher. This may be a more difficult process than hiring a teacher for traditional elementary grades. It is critical to find teachers who understand that prekindergarten children have different cognitive-developmental needs than elementary-age children. It is not sufficient to take a traditional elementary curriculum and make the vocabulary and concepts simplier. The entire curriculum needs to reflect the developmental stages of these children. This is made graphically clear in Weikart's (Weikart, Schweinhart, and Larner, 1986) longitudinal (15 years) comparison of various curriculum approaches with this age group.

It is also important to recognize your district's time lines with regard to any necessary room modifications, and particularly with regard to the acquisition of classroom equipment and materials. One painful feature of such a short-term program was that many companies took months to fill purchase orders. Some material still has not arrived. It was also notable that the required use of purchase orders resulted in higher payments for many items in comparison to what would have been paid had they been purchased "across the counter." Some stores even openly quoted separate prices for purchase orders, while others refused to accept them at all.

It would seem to be profitable to find a state-approved method for purchasing objects with cash. This would certainly make state dollars, or dollars from any other source, go further. Other serious time factors to consider include the need for pretesting and the selection of children, both of which are discussed elsewhere in this guide.

Selection of the Children to be Served/Ratio of Children to Teacher/Aide

In this program, with limited funding and limited space, there was also a limit to the number of children who could be served. This led to hours of discussion in the advisory board meetings as to the appropriate rationale for selecting children for the program. Trimble has a Title I prekindergarten program which has been in place for 13 years. Many of the children who apply for the Title I program wind up on waiting lists. Knowing that these children probably needed the program most, it was difficult to face the fact that for this model program the state wanted a cross-section of children insofar as that was possible. Fortunately, due to families moving, entry into other programs, etc., it was not necessary to turn down any children, and the cross-section was achieved without the need for such difficult decisions.

Nevertheless, selection criteria are a problem that you may need to face. There were two issues that we considered important. First, an effective teacher/aide ratio had to be maintained. For this program, the ratio was 1:6, largely due to a very small classroom. Probably the largest ratio that can remain effective at this age is 1:8. Second, there was a desire to serve children from impoverished homes, but there also was a desire for children to interact with peers possessing varying skills and abilities, since young children learn from imitating each other.

The staff and advisors discussed at length techniques for converting this program to serve a larger group of students, with larger teacher/aide ratios. The group concluded that the ratio needed to be maintained in the vicinity of 1:8, but that the ratio might be able to be maintained through the use of parent volunteers or high school students doing practice training. While the quality of the overall program might suffer, it would also be possible to concentrate on the 1:8 ratio primarily at the beginning of the program. Once children became comfortable in the room and with the curriculum, they could be given extended periods of self-

directed free play. It seems clear, however, that in the early stages of the program, the lower ratio was critical for success.

One of the remarkably effective aspects of this program was the ease with which the children adjusted to it. They settled into the classroom very quickly. There were no tears. Children were initially phased into the program -- four each day. The intention was for the "experienced" students to assist in the adjustment of the "novices." To some extent this was successful, but the ease of transition was probably more a function of the home visits by the aide and teacher prior to the beginning of the program, and the excellent teacher/aide to student ratio. By snack time of the third day of the program, the children looked like longtime friends.

The Physical Setting/Organization of the Classroom

The description of the physical space begins with a statement of the ideal and is followed by the description of the current program's physical setting. The latter description will provide encouragement to those of you faced with severely restricted space.

Ideally, the prekindergarten room contains many distinct areas, so that each area of the curriculum can function simultaneously and independently. Sufficient visual barriers and sound absorbing materials would permit activity in each area to be unaffected by activity in another area. The following activities would benefit from their own separate areas: art, writing, reading, math and fine-motor skills, sand/water play, block building, dramatic play, music, science, and large-motor skills. Compatible activities would be grouped together. Activities that support dramatic play, such as building with blocks, dressing up, and housekeeping would be clustered and separated from the intellectual problem-solving activities, which require quiet concentration.

The room would include cozy private areas for one-person or two-person activities, as well as open areas for whole-group activities. Each space would have adequate shelving, permitting material to be logically organized, aesthetically displayed, and easily accessible to the children. Tables would be small and moveable to permit the reshaping of the activity areas as needed. The

art area would require provisions for allowing a large number of wet paintings to dry. Books would be displayed in numerous racks that permit the covers to remain visible.

The present program did not have the ideal physical environment. The area was a tiny portion of a room housing two large kindergarten classes. It was separated visually from those classes, but there was substantial sound intrusion. In addition, the space was shared with a long-established morning prekindergarten program that operated with different priorities. Despite the physical drawbacks of the room, it proved to be a viable space for the program. Only two constant activity areas were established; all other divisions relied on portable screens. The dramatic play, housekeeping, and dress-up materials were housed in the tiny art area, and children often carried items to the larger block/circle area to use. Areas consistently performed dual functions. Math and fine-motor skills were combined with the writing area in the one protected small-table area. The reading area flowed into the block area. Suprisingly, if any activity suffered, it was certainly block building. Reading was a high-priority activity for both the teacher/aide and the children. Together with dramatic play and other activities requiring a reasonably sized area, it often subsumed the block area. When children felt the need for quiet, isolated space for reading or small-group activities, they proved to be rather innovative. A large bin that had stored the unit blocks early in the program was tipped over on its side by the children and used near a wall to create a small space in which a few children could sit (after the unit-block shelving arrived). Do not, therefore, be daunted by the lack of an ideal space; compromises can be surprisingly effective.

THE PROGRAM ITSELF

This program was individualized, developmentally oriented, and activity-centered. Scheduling, staffing, and curriculum were structured to enable children to explore a wide range of activities and materials in art, mathematics, science, language, literature, music, motor skills, and dramatic play. Frequent self-selection of activities and use of concrete materials were key elements of the program. This emphasis was based on an interactionist view of learning in which children are seen as constructing knowledge and understanding by acting on their environment and observing the consequences of that interaction (Day, 1983, p.191). According to this theory, children learn best when they become engaged in a task

on their own terms; and, if given the opportunity, they will naturally direct their own learning, based upon their individual readiness for specific concepts. In keeping with this theory, a language-experience and literature approach characterized the pre-reading/reading program, while activities based on Workjobs (Lorton, 1972) and Mathematics their way (Lorton, 1976) provided the basis for the mathematics program. These methods encourage the self-selection of activities and materials that will stimulate inquiry and problem solving. Significant classroom materials included 125 quality classroom picture books and 75 books borrowed from the library, unifix cubes, a pan balance, pattern blocks, unit blocks, puzzles, picture cards, dramatic-play equipment, a water table, and numerous teacher-made and children-made materials, as well as a wide range of art materials. (In retrospect, double copies of many of the books and as many as five copies of the most popular books would have been useful.)

The aim of this program was to foster children's self-confidence, self-expression, curiosity, and excitement about their world; to support their explorations and strivings toward mastery; and to encourage children's concern for and appropriate interaction with one another. The roles of the teacher and aide were to assess individual children's developmental needs; to facilitate and guide learning as children manipulated materials; and to encourage problem solving, independence, and caring and cooperation among the children.

Key elements of the program included (1) a regular schedule that alternated periods of teacher-structured group activity (e.g., music, story, discussion times) with periods in which children selected among several projects or initiated their own child-directed activities; (2) a curriculum that was a function of children's input and needs; (3) flexibility of timing and activity so that even teacher-directed group activities might be altered or cancelled when children's interests or needs indicated more immediate priorities; (4) children teaching one another, whether by modeling informally or supervising more directly in child-to-child pairings; and (5) classroom management that assumed children would accept appropriate and necessary limits and that expected children to attempt to resolve their problems with each other before turning to an adult. When adults were approached for help in resolving a conflict, the adult modeled appropriate language and behavior for the child, suggesting possible solutions for the problem and even suggesting wording the child might use, e.g., "You could tell her that you're not finished, but that she can have a turn when you are."

There was also a clear effort to eliminate sexual, racial, and ethnic stereotypes. Teacher/aide language, pronouns in songs and stories, and materials such as books and puzzles were all evaluated and monitored throughout the program to minimize these stereotypes. Songs, for instance, alternated between the male Old McDonald and the female Old McDonald. Books that featured balanced portrayals of sex and race were actively sought out, and materials that violated this balance were generally eliminated from the classroom. Some exceptions to this are noted in the discussion of book selection, together with how the stereotypes were discussed in class. Some useful books for overcoming these stereotypes are also noted in the bibliography.

Class was held Monday through Thursday. On Friday, the teacher and aide met with a psychological consultant, an educational consultant, and the school principal to review the week's activities and to discuss any problems or theoretical questions that had arisen.

Daily Schedule

An outline of the day's schedule and descriptions of some key projects and moments in relation to this schedule will help to show how each of these elements contributed to this program.

Arrival and Greeting Time: 12:50-1:00

Most of the children arrived on one bus, which had been on a route for nearly an hour. Some had notes for the teacher or aide, books to check in with the aide, or collected treasures, such as bottle caps or little boxes to be dug from the bottom of a knapsack. Time was allowed for brief conversations with the few parents who bring their children.

Circle Time: 1:00-1:30

During circle time, the children and teacher sat on the rug in the largest open area. The children and teacher discussed who was absent and predicted how many students there would be when they counted the number of children in the circle. There might be a discussion of the weekend, of something someone had brought to share, or of anything else that suggested itself for immediate, full-group attention.

The class calendar was a pegboard consisting of five rows of seven squares, with space at the top for the name of the month, and each column labeled with the name of the day. Numbers for the pegs were on disks that were hung, one each day, on the appropriate peg. Generally, the children counted the days of the month, and one child added the tag for the present day. This activity is good for counting, numeral recognition, and left-to-right and top-to-bottom sequencing. The group then usually sang a few songs. The children preferred songs that named everyone, such as "Mary Wore a Red Dress" or "Johnny Works With One (Two/Three/Four/Five) Hammer." These are especially useful for the beginning of the year and when visitors come, to assist in learning everyone's name.

At different times of the year, various other activities also took place during circle time. Early in the program, there were discussions on the colors or the shapes the children had seen that day while coming on the bus. This was usually preceded by a note to the parents the previous evening, asking them to remind the children the following day of the types of things to watch for during their bus ride to school. Movement and dramatic activities grew out of the singing. One favorite cooperative activity involved everyone acting the part of a cog in a group machine. Sometimes, wall charts and graphs were made about the group's clothes, eye or hair color, etc. The children initiated pairing off, or partnering, which was then done routinely for movement activities and pattern copying with unifix cubes or pattern blocks. While the 30 minutes allotted for these activities seemed more than adequate at the program's beginning, this was not the case by the end of the program, and it was not unusual for circle time to be somewhat longer than planned.

Activity Time: 1:30-2:20

During circle time, the aide prepared several activities to be carried out on the three tables in the room and sometimes on the rug. While many activities could be done independently, many others encouraged cooperation. An easel could be shared by two children; the water-table, block, and dramatic-play areas often generated cooperative play; and many games required joint efforts. In addition to the teacher-selected activities, children could get themselves brushes and paper for the easels, ask to open the water table, select their own materials from the open shelves, or ask for particular art materials not accessible to them. Sometimes, the teacher limited the number and types of activities.

Generally, one of the activities available was an art project. The aide usually supervised this and other activities, while the teacher worked with a small group (or sometimes only one or two children) with math or writing projects. Often, the teacher could remain focused on one activity for the full 50 minutes, as children flowed into and out of the area. Children also frequently stayed focused on a single activity for more than half the period. The teacher's involvement with small numbers of children in the more difficult, challenging activities helped the children to persist at these for longer periods. Children were, however, free to move from one activity to another when they chose. A few children who had difficulty in completing tasks were encouraged to complete particular projects. Typically, there was little wandering, although some activities held the children's interest longer than others. Children tended to devote more time to activities, as they became more comfortable with the schedule and materials. Newer or more difficult tasks were usually explored first. Thereafter, more familiar long-term activities were undertaken. Usually toward the end of each day, however, children again began to move between activities more frequently. A description of some of the activities is provided below.

Cleanup, Hand Washing, Independent Reading Time: 2:20-2:35

Children were expected to help clean up any necessary areas, rather than merely being responsible for their own materials. Children enjoyed washing paint brushes, sponging the tables, and emptying the water table. One child who was particularly skilled with puzzles, but who seemed to lag behind his classmates in other areas, took great pride in effectively reorganizing the chaos of the puzzle table.

After hand washing, each child chose a book and took a chair to the circle area. When the teacher introduced this activity on the first day of class, the children complained that they didn't know how to read. The activity was dropped, but was reinstituted within days, at the request of the children themselves. Within a few weeks, it was hard to give enough time to this period in the tight schedule of the day. As children got to know the books, they enjoyed "reading" them together, telling the story from memory, sometimes word for word, sometimes taking turns. Some children moved quickly through several books; others lingered over one. Often at this time, the children selected the books that they wanted to take home. They placed them in their cubbies, and the aide recorded the titles. Children were permitted to take four books home at a time, and to have no more than six at home. There was no time limit on how long they could keep them.

During the four months of the program, the children each took home between 40 and 60 books. Not a single book was lost. A list of books in the classroom is included toward the end of this handbook, together with notations of particularly useful books.

Story Time: 2:35-2:45

After the independent reading time, the teacher or the aide read a story. Although the children enjoyed taking many long and complex stories home with them, they preferred simple stories to be read during this time, and loved to hear the same stories read repeatedly. The most frequently requested stories included Corduroy, Caps for sale, Alexander and the terrible, horrible, no good, very bad day, and Blueberries for Sal. The children loved joining in the reading of all these stories with words or actions, sometimes including relatively complex dramatics. Toward the end of the year, the children became interested in dinosaurs, and some nonfiction books on that topic were also read at story time.

Snack: 2:45-2:55

Early in the year, children helped to set up the snack. As children became more involved in other activities, however, there seemed to be less time for snack preparation. For the remainder of the program, this function reverted to the aide, or occasionally to the teacher, when the aide read the story or was involved in another activity. The transition from story to snack was often done according to the initial letters of the children's names or the colors they were wearing (e.g., "All children whose names start with 'a' or 'j' can go to snack.").

Snack was a friendly, social time. The snack itself consisted of fruit or crackers in baskets, sometimes accompanied by cups of peanut butter with large spreading knives. Children poured their own juice or milk. The teacher, aide, and parent volunteers always sat with the children and joined them in their snack. Because the children usually wanted more juice or milk than was available, the adults typically drank water. The children quickly noticed this, and jumped at the chance to fill the adults' cups at the sink. The children enjoyed rinsing and refilling the pitchers with water for their tables.

Initially, there were attempts by the children to establish "boy" and "girl" tables. This was quickly discouraged by also organizing tables according to hair color and eye color. Within a few weeks, children had formed friendships without

regard to sex, probably due to some strong role models among the children, and the problem resolved itself. Sex-role stereotypes were seldom subsequently a problem.

Outside Time: 2:55-3:15

During this time, the playground was used exclusively by the children in the program. The playground was well-equipped, and the children used a wide variety of equipment. The play was typically very cooperative. They copied tricks, pushed each other on swings, helped each other onto teeter-totters, and dug in the sand together. Toward the end of the program, some children became involved in boy-chase-girl games. This became more reciprocal when the teacher suggested that the boys should be chased too if they wanted to be. The children also enjoyed chasing the teacher.

Closing Time Circle: 3:15-3:25

This short period didn't occur if the schedule ran late, as it often did. A favorite activity was reading one another's names from laminated cards (the child whose name was on the card wasn't permitted to answer). By the end of the program, the children could "read" many names, based primarily on the initial letter. Since several children in the class had names beginning with "j," attention was focused on final letters as well. The "sh" sound, for instance, was used to discriminate "Josh" from "Jared." Children also enjoyed finding words within their names (man in Amanda; just and tin in Justin). Alternate activities included discussions, a short game or story, or songs there wasn't time to sing during the earlier circle time.

Dismissal: 3:25-3:30

Adults walked the children to the buses before the older children were dismissed.

Key Activities

Language Arts

Resources: Creative activities for young children

Significant activities:

Picture-chart making: Eye color, hair color, favorite foods, etc. were made with pictures drawn, labeled, and cut out by the children.

Labeling the room: Words were dotted to be traced or printed to be copied. Sometimes, children were asked to print words they had selected themselves. The words were dictated to the children. Children loved this activity. Whenever it was offered, many were involved for long periods of time. Whenever it was not offered, the children asked for it.

Word charts: "Our hands help us...," "When I was a baby, I.... Now I...," "We help..."

Sound cans: Eight-ounce milk cartons were filled with different types and quantities of materials (bottle caps, rice, beans) and used as sound cans. Children could try to copy the sounds by adding materials to identical cartons.

Smell cans: These were filled with mysterious but known foods to be smelled a and matched.

Sentence making: Many children enjoyed learning to write their names and the names of family and friends, and wrote them down on cards. The children were encouraged also to learn a few verbs of their choice (e.g., "loves," "helps," or as one child requested, "bites"), each of which was put on a different-colored card. Using these cards, the child could construct various sentences. All these cards were sent home with the child at the end of the program for use during the summer.

Empty books: These were made for the children to write or draw in as they wished. Some children enjoyed more structured books, too, such as word books, with a page for each letter of the alphabet, and "me" books, describing physical characteristics, family, favorite foods, etc. Each child was also given a booklet to keep at home to record comments and remarks about books read at home. This booklet included sentence starters for the parents (e.g., My favorite character was..., My favorite part was..., I like/didn't like this book because...) and space to draw a picture for each book. The aide made a list for each child of all the books that child took home over the course of the year.

Alphabet bingo: Children traced two sets of letters on separate sheets of paper. Some letters were cut out, but others were kept on the sheets of paper, which then were used as bingo cards. One child spontaneously used the cards to practice handwriting and went through nearly a dozen cards without attempting to cut any of them for use in a game.

Reading and writing each other's names: Children enjoyed sorting and filing one another's artwork in cubbies by reading their classmates' names from the laminated cards, as described earlier. While playing doctor's

office, the children were encouraged to write down the names of the "patients" waiting to be seen. Toward the end of the program, a child took down orders for books to be taken home. Some children wrote their own names; some dictated to the child taking the orders.

"Wild Thing" reading and discussion: At about the mid-point in the program, a "Wild Thing" stuffed animal, together with a notebook and an extra copy of Sendak's Where the wild things are, was introduced to the room. Each night a different child took home the set and dictated a story about Wild Thing to his/her parents. This story was read during the following day's circle time. In this manner, each child had an opportunity to be the center of the group's attention. As time went on, Wild Thing's reported behavior became more and more bizarre, leading to many interesting discussions about love and discipline. Questions arose about why Wild Thing acted the way he?/she? did and how it? might be helped to learn better behavior.

Math Activities

Resources: Mathematics their way
Work jobs

The mathematics component of the program had children experiment with classification and set formation, patterning, one-to-one correspondence, and number. A basic premise of this curriculum was that children would learn best if they were permitted to explore materials freely. Some materials and grouping of materials encouraged certain kinds of discoveries. Teacher questions further guided learning. Collections (lids, bottle caps, colored cubes, pegs, etc.), attribute blocks and grouping rings (used for set and subset formation and discussion of attributes), unifix cubes, pattern blocks, a pan balance, materials (water, rice, and beans) to pour and measure into variously shaped jars and measuring cups, and unit blocks were key materials. Group games (see bibliography) also enhanced the math curriculum.

Pattern blocks: These blocks were used in free play and in a number of partnered activities in which a child copied a partner's design or continued a repeating pattern.

Unifix cubes: Activities included weighing, balancing, and counting the blocks in a pan balance individually or with a partner; making rods; copying or continuing patterns; and using a rod to measure

the heights of children. One day during a partnered activity that involved copying rod patterns, the children spontaneously decided they wanted to measure the height of the classroom using the rods, and taped the column to the wall. Later, they compared their own heights to the column.

Pegs and a pegboard with 100 holes for designs, color sorting, and counting: These materials enabled a nice cooperative counting experience to develop, when two girls who could count to 40 were helped by a boy who could count to 70. He listened and only provided the next number when they got stuck. He also used it to practice counting to 100.

Dice and bottle cap game: Each child took 20 caps and then took turns rolling two large dice. The child counted the number of dice and took that number of caps out of her/his tray. Turns continued until all the caps were removed. This game was instituted by a teacher when a child brought a dice flipper to class one day. That child and one other were so absorbed in playing with the dice that the teacher introduced the game to adapt the toy to the curriculum. Several children remained occupied with the game for an extended period.

Sorting box: This was a hardwood box with interchangeable panels and sets of wooden cards to insert into appropriate slots. Sets included shapes, colors, facial expressions, and objects to be matched to numerals. A highpoint of the program involved a girl who had a hard time engaging socially and who could be very aggressive and seemingly unaware of others' feelings. One day, she began to help a shy, immature boy with lower math skills than she had. The teacher demonstrated how the girl could listen to the boy count each set of objects he wished to sort and help him only when he made a mistake or was silent for more than a few seconds. They worked as a team with the sorting box for more than 10 minutes. It was a great experience for them both.

Unit blocks: These provided a wonderful social, mathematical, and dramatic play resource, encouraging exploration of symmetry, balance, and mathematical equivalence as well as both independent and cooperative play. Labeling and sign reading extended the language arts aspect of block play. Because the class included girls as well as boys who were interested in complex, precarious structures, there was much cross-sex play in the block area.

Water table: This was another area for cooperative as well as independent play. There were graduated cylinders, measuring cups, a water wheel,

many containers of assorted sizes and shapes, strainers, funnels, etc. Straws or bubble bath was sometimes introduced. The water was occasionally drained and replaced with wet or dry sand. In this case, sand combs, rakes, and a sand saw were added to the implements.

Many activities were quite spontaneous. One day, a girl brought a large clear glass rock to class. When the children asked how heavy it was, the teacher led the children into a discussion of how the object might be weighed. One child got out the pan balance, and another collected boxes to place in the pan opposite the rock. Eventually, the children found that it took 137 bottle caps in one child's boot or 161 caps in another child's shoe. Several children counted the caps (with some help), having spent a long time filling the pan and getting past their confusion about what to do if the shoe side got lower than the rock side.

Art

Resources: Please don't move the muffin tins
Creative activities for young children

At the beginning of the program, only circular paper was used at the easels and for drawing. Shortly thereafter, triangular paper was added, then squares, and finally rectangles. Colors were introduced one at a time. When one child asked for green paint, the teacher provided him with blue and yellow and suggested that he try those instead. The child grumbled a bit, but proceeded to paint, discovering with great delight that mixing the blue and yellow produced the green he was looking for. The easels were so popular for the first month that the children waited for turns throughout the day. Children's ability to put on their own smocks, procure and hang up their own paper, write their names (or a recognizable equivalent) on their products, and display their own paintings was crucial to the effective operation of the classroom and the conservation of teacher/aide time. Over the course of the year, the following were also especially important activities:

fingerpainting on the table and printing by putting paper over the design;
watercolor painting;
using markers on white paper;
drawing to music;
using colored chalk on colored paper (children's choice of color);
using sand and colored glue;
painting with q-tips;

creating things with playdough, clay, and plasticine;
making circle chains out of children's hands, traced and cut from different colors;
body tracing (an adult or another child traced the child, who then drew features, clothes, hair, etc.);
making junk collages with cardboard boxes, yarn, bottle caps, wallpaper, tissue paper, etc., on cardboard bases

Computer Use

The computer augmented various parts of the curriculum, depending on the programs being used. It was a very popular feature of the program. Four to five children were gathered around the computer whenever it was available. The program aide worked with the children at the computer and guided their activities. Little encouragement was required; the programs provided their own user-friendly corrections and reinforcements. The aide introduced new programs for children and guided the extension of their understanding from the point of initial engagement. It was remarkable to see the patience of the children waiting for their turn, and the degree of their cooperation in trying to solve problems posed by the programs. One of the most impatient and aggressive children in the classroom at one point waited over 20 minutes for a chance to work at the computer. Another child, the youngest in the class and clearly not as intellectually advanced as some of the other children, was the standout in the class when it came to the computer.

Minnesota Educational Computing Consortium preschool software was chosen from the school district's collection. There were numerous counting games in a sufficient array of presentations so that the children never seemed to lose interest. There was a good balance among alphabet-oriented, reasoning, memory, and discrimination games. Different topics were popular with various groups of children, but all were popular with some segment of the class.

The Role of the Aide

In the mornings, the aide made visits to each child's home, weekly during the first half of the program and every two weeks in the second half. The aide was

well-experienced had been a member of the community for a long time. She knew directly or indirectly all the families involved in the program. She was quickly and comfortably accepted into their homes. Parents felt free to ask questions about the program and school. Early in the program, the aide and the teacher worked together in selecting books, which she took to the children's homes and reviewed with the parents. As noted earlier, the children later began to select their own books. The parents were encouraged to read the books to the children frequently. After a week or two, when the children became familiar with the books, they enjoyed "reading" them to the aide during the home visits. Booklets were made from folded paper, and children were encouraged to record their thoughts and feelings about the books by dictating to their parents. The aide worked with the parents, encouraging them to record the child's thoughts in the child's own words. Workjobs projects, home writing, and mathematics tasks were also discussed with the parents. In addition, the aide coordinated parent visits to the classroom and the activities of parent classroom volunteers.

In the afternoons, the aide worked in the classroom. The teacher and aide met during the half hour before the children arrived, and discussed and prepared the activities planned for the day. The aide often selected one of the three activities for the day. She supervised many of the group activities, allowing the teacher to work with individuals and smaller groups. She was sensitive to each child's learning style and adapted planned activities to match the needs of the children. She was also responsible for the standardized testing at the beginning and end of the program, and she worked with the teacher in completing the program's checklists on each child.

Before dismissal for the summer, she prepared packets of activities for the children and their parents, so they could continue the learning process through the three-month absence from school. Each of the packets, which were based on Workjobs, was individualized, designed with both the child's strengths and weaknesses in mind. She also included recipes for nutritious snacks the child could help prepare.

Involvement of Parents in the Program

Parents of the children in this program met with both the teacher and aide in an initial home visit. The purpose of the initial meeting was to learn from the

parents about their child, rather than to educate the parents. The teacher and aide made clear to the parents the respect the program staff had for the parents' role. The teacher, however, also took this opportunity to describe the program's design and philosophy. The parents were told not to expect daily worksheets or art projects. They were asked to have their children wear old clothes since they would frequently be involved in activities such as painting, and smocks would not be totally effective in keeping clothes clean. They were also encouraged to visit the classroom and to take part as volunteer aides.

Two of the children's parents participated almost weekly as volunteer aides. With a minimal amount of supervision, they greatly increased the amount of individual attention given to each child. Perhaps more importantly, they also had the opportunity to learn a great deal about how to interact with their own children in their homes. No problems were encountered with a parent favoring her own child, or for that matter, with a child hovering around the parent. Overall, the parent participation was a very valuable experience for both the parent and the class.

Parents were kept informed about the program via a newsletter sent home in alternate weeks, describing projects, plans, and highlights. There was some disappointment in the level of involvement of parents in the program, but in addition to the two mothers who volunteered as aides, numerous parents assisted on the field trips at the end of the year. Parent workshops were held three times during the program. The first meeting was by invitation, and it gave parents an opportunity to visit the classroom. The functions of various areas of the room were explained, selected activities were demonstrated and explained, and the parents were allowed to watch a videotape of classroom activity. Parents seem to be extremely enthusiastic about seeing their children on videotape, and it permits parents who have difficulty coming to the school during the day to observe the classroom routine. The other two workshops were conducted on the use of books and on the use of television with children. These workshops were attended by only a few of the parents.

Forty-five-minute conferences were held between the teacher, the aide, and each parent at the termination of the program. The emphasis of these discussions was on how the parents might support and extend their children's interest in writing and reading their own words and stories, hearing good books read to

them, exploring mathematics concepts through the manipulation of objects and exploring art media. In particular, the parents were encouraged to use books with simple vocabulary and repeating phrases, such as Caps for sale. The aide and teacher pointed out the children's intense involvement in such stories, as evidenced by the choral reading, dramatizations of the stories, and sight recognition of many words. As noted above, parents were also provided with a packet of activity materials for the summer, individualized for their child's needs and interests.

Use of Videotapes

One class session per week was chosen to be videotaped. Erickson and Wilson (1982) provide an excellent manual on videotaping in the classroom, and this guide was followed in the present program. Essentially, the camera was focused on a target area and kept there for an extended period. It is likely that this type of videotaping could be done without extra personnel, simply using fixed positions for the camera. Initially, there was concern that the children might react to the presence of the camera, resulting in disruption of the environment. The tapes, teacher, and aide, however, confirmed that in the course of the entire program there were less than a dozen comments about or reactions to the camera.

At the beginning of the program, these tapes were reviewed each Friday by the school principal, psychological and educational consultants, and the teacher and aide. This was a supportive and constructive process, rather than a critical one, and it proved quite valuable in the refinement of the program. Later in the program, these Friday meetings involved consultation on specific learning or behavioral problems in the classroom and on substantive theoretical issues in early childhood education.

ASSESSMENT

Assessment of the Child

The issue of assessment of the preschool child is a difficult one, and it occupied much of the discussion in both the advisory board meetings and in the Friday meetings between the teacher, aide, and consultants. The first question that needs to be answered is this: What is the purpose of the assessments? Indeed, is it necessary to do assessments at all?

There are likely to be two reasons for conducting assessments, each having its own importance. In the real world, programs need to justify their existence to continue receiving funds. For this reason, a program may have to demonstrate that besides helping children develop themselves, it enabled them to improve their percentile placement. After all, if the child merely remained at the same level of development relative to comparable peers who were not involved in the program, it may be difficult to justify continued funding, unless the actual purpose of the program is simply to provide care for the children of working parents. To demonstrate such changes, the assessment instrument must provide broadly standardized percentile scores or a similar equivalent.

The second likely reason for conducting assessments is to benefit the child. Such assessments may be essentially screening devices to provide for early interventions when skill deficits are noted. They may be used merely to find such shortcomings or as documentation of problems noted by the teacher but not recognized by the parent. Hopefully, however, these assessments are also used to note a child's strengths. This would enable a teacher or aide to understand better the child's point of initial engagement, and to use the child's strengths to buttress her/his weaknesses. In the present program, for example, one boy had a tendency to become rather disruptive at times. Simply noting this problem on some assessment device, however, would have beem misleading and damaging to him. It should also be noted that early in the program, he often organized group activities that required unlikely combinations of children to work cooperatively. He also befriended children who at first seemed somewhat left out by other children. His social skills may have made a significant contribution to the level of social engagement and interaction that the program enjoyed. Thus, an assessment technique that focuses primarily on skill deficits may provide a very inaccurate picture of the child.

Once you have determined reasons for your assessment, a second set of questions comes into focus: What is it that needs to be measured at this age? Is it important to measure rote knowledge, reasoning abilities, social skills, or some selection/combination of these or other characteristics? Are there <u>any</u> genuinely appropriate instruments to measure your targeted characteristics?

Rote knowledge is considered important in the traditional educational setting in which most of the children will find themselves the following year. The assessment of rote knowledge, however, may ignore the enacted curriculum, which is developing the child's reasoning ability and social skills. Detailed checklists, such as the Portage, provide a seemingly endless shopping list of discrete skills falling into many categories. This approach seems to focus attention on a child's shortcomings. The child as a whole, living, breathing human seems to become lost in the process of checking off dozens of items on each page. These checklists have a valid purpose in specific settings, but seem out of place in a general preschool environment. Some social skills measures, such as the California Preschool Social Competency Scale (Levine, Elzey, and Lewis, 1969), provide potentially valuable devices, but do not have the strength of extensive validation research. The California Scale and others like it have the additional drawback of using outdated normative samples. There are other assessment devices for this age group that you may wish to examine. These devices are provided by agencies such as American Guidance Services, Curriculum Associates, Consulting Psychologists Press, Pro-Ed, and Western Psychological Services. Goodwin and Driscoll's (1980) discussion of preschool assessment may also prove useful to you.

The Trimble district has used the Walker Readiness Test For Disadvantaged Preschool Children as its prekindergarten assessment device for the past 10 years. The Walker has proven to be an unlikely but effective predictor of success in later grades for children in the Title I program, and therefore was the instrument administered at the beginning and end of the current program. Serious shortcomings were noted with the Walker, however, particularly in terms of children's test-taking skills. (Three children showed sharp decreases in skills based on the Walker, although these decreases were strongly contradicted by classroom behavior. The remaining children increased an <u>average</u> of <u>13</u> percentile points.) All those involved in the program were interested in developing a realistic, yet brief assessment tool that examined the strengths as well as the weaknesses of the children.

After an extensive period of discussion, consultation, and piloting, the Behavior Observation Record emerged. This instrument calls for the teacher and aide to record both positive and negative observations on each child's social/emotional development, general cognitive development, communication

skills, book and print awareness, art and music skills, mathematics skills, and motor-coordination skills. Each of these topical areas contains several additional areas as well as space for general comments. Without question, this instrument needs further refinement and development, but a copy is included in Appendix B for your examination. If you find it useful in your setting, please feel free to adapt it to your needs.

In deciding whether to have any assessment outside the class, please remember that the teacher and aide have a finite amount of time available to them. Time taken for assessment outside the class, as in the case of the Walker, is time lost with the other children in the class. It would also be profitable to remember that paperwork remains the most stressful problem for teachers (Grier and Jacobs, 1986) and that a burdensome assessment device is unlikely to be beneficial to the program, the child, or the teacher.

Preschool Parent Questionnaire

During the last two weeks of the program, questionnaires were sent home to gain feedback on the program from the parents. The questionnaire (a copy may be found in Appendix C) requested the parents to respond to two general questions about what was liked or disliked about the program. The general questions were followed by more specific questions about social skills, academic interests, and changes in the way the child spends his/her free time.

These assessments were extremely positive. Only one negative comment was made about the program -- one mother indicated she didn't understand how the activities in the classroom could have taught her child as much as they did. This brought to mind the comment of a preschool teacher who observed at a program similar to ours. After having watched an hour of classroom activities, she said, "Well, this is fine, but when do they begin teaching?" This mother's comment may point to a failure in the present program to clarify the program's approach to all parents. Mothers and fathers noted a tremendous increase in social skills and an enlarged interest in books, art, and writing. One parent suggested that the program had generated another Sesame Street "Count," saying that her son would now count anything as long as there was more than one.

What Could Have Been Better?

Following the end of the program, the advisory board met to discuss prospects for future funding, and particularly ways the program could have been improved. Nearly everyone agreed that the greatest drawback to the program was the lack of appropriate assessment tools at the beginning of the program, which hampered, to some extent, the demonstration of the program's achievements. Our team strongly encourages you to give careful consideration to the selection of good assessment tools before your program begins, so you can accurately assess the strengths and weaknesses of your program. There was also some feeling that the program would be more successful if classes were held five days a week, and some felt that a full-day program would be more beneficial than the half-day format. There was not a clear consensus on these issues. There was also a discussion of the complications that arose from starting in January, as called for in the state proposal. The winter was plagued with numerous snow days in the first few weeks, and this definitely resulted in some disorientation on the part of the children.

Other areas for improvement involved factors that did not relate to the program design. These primarily involved the physical space for the classroom. The small size of the area, sound intrusion from adjacent classrooms in the same module, and the fact that the area was shared with a morning prekindergarten definitely complicated this program. Block play, dramatic play, and small-group quiet activity were hindered by the lack of or multiple use of appropriate space. Even the use of the small space provided to the program was limited by the prior physical arrangement of the room for the morning Title I program. Music activities were restricted because of sound intrusion from adjacent classes sharing the same room. Fortunately, the program design, the teacher, and the aide overcame these obvious limitations.

CLASSROOM BIBLIOGRAPHY

Book selection was an important part of this program. Criteria for choosing books included the following:

1) Quality of Story: Does the story have meaning for young children? Is it interesting? Are the characters believeable? Are feelings expressed honestly? Is problem solving handled maturely or are there good guys and bad guys and simplistic solutions?
2) Quality of Illustrations: Are they artful or cartoonish and

condescending? Are children and animals realistic or infantilized and cutesy? In science and social studies books, is there enough accuracy and detail so the children can learn from the illustrations?

3) Countering Sexual and Social Stereotypes: Does the book portray girls and women as often as boys and men? Are sex-role stereotypes broken down in characterizations and illustrations? Are boys and men portrayed in nurturing roles, performing household chores, and other traditionally female tasks? Are girls and women portrayed in professional and other traditionally male roles? Are blacks and other racial and ethnic groups portrayed in more than a token manner? Are the elderly and handicapped represented realistically?

4) Support of Pro-social Behaviors: Are problems handled through negotiation or violence? Is humor provided at the expense of particular characters?

5) Quality of Language: Are syntax and vocabulary mature and interesting or condescendingly simple? Is there repetition and rhythm to the language, to encourage children to memorize and join in the story? Is the dialogue realistic and natural?

There are many excellent children's authors and illustrators. The children enjoyed exploring several books by one author or illustrator, and the teacher felt that the children came to know the creators. While some of the classics depict stereotyped sex roles, many are worth presenting for their story, language, or illustrations. Stereotypes can be discussed and placed in the context of old-fashioned ways of thinking and viewing people.

Following is a list of some authors and illustrators on whom you may wish to focus.

Miteumasa Anno (wordless books, delightful detail):
Anno's counting book, Anno's journey, etc.

Molly Bang (rejects stereotypes): Ten, nine, eight.

Virginia Lee Buxton (wonderful stories, detailed illustrations, some-sex role stereotyping): Katy and the big snow, Mike Mulligan and his steam shovel, The little house.

Eric Carle (vibrant colors, incorporates conceptual learning in imaginative, appealing stories): The very hungry caterpillar, The very busy spider, etc.

Dorothy Chlad (rejects stereotypes): When there is a fire, go outside.

Barbara Cooney (beautifully illustrated portrait of older independent woman): Miss Rumphius.

Tomie de Paole (humorous and colorful): Strega Noria, etc.

Don Freeman (endearing characters, great stories): Corduroy and Pocket for Corduroy were the favorites of many children in the program.

Gail Gibbons (detailed and accurate illustrations, nonsexist, nonfiction): Trucks, The seasons of Arnold's apple tree, Tunnels, etc.

Derek Hall with John Butler as illustrator (accurate animals, focus on behavior): Elephant bathes, Gorilla builds, Otter swims, Tiger runs, etc.

Rebecca Hankin (rejects stereotypes): I can be a firefighter, etc.

Tana Hoben (imaginative black-and-white photographs, concept development): Count and see, Is it larger? Is it smaller?, Circles, triangles, and squares, Over, under, and through, etc.

Shirley Hughes (humorously and sensitively drawn characters, men in nurturing roles): Bathwater's hot, When we went to the park, Noisy, Alfie gets in first, etc.

Pat Hutchins (humorous and engaging stories, easy to memorize language): Titch, You'll soon grow into them, Titch, One hunter, Goodnight owl.

Ezra Jack Keats (black characters, wonderful art, and stories that capture the feelings of being young): The snowy day, Whistle for Willie, Regards to the Man in the Moon, etc.

Wendy Kesselman (portrays independent older woman, illustrated by Barbara Cooney): Emma.

Margaret Lane (realistic animals in natural settings): The beaver, The squirrel, etc.

Joe Leeker (sensitive portrayals that include handicapped children, fine illustrations): Nick joins in, Howie helps himself, He's my brother, The do-something day.

Arnold Lobel (sensitive and humorous stories and illustrations, characters, and situations with which children can identify): the "Frog and Toad" series, On Market Street, etc.

Robert McCloskey (engaging stories; realistic sketches, including one of a group of wonderful old men; sex roles of the 50's, which is when the stories were written, although the girls are active and adventuresome): Blueberries for Sal, One morning in Maine, Make way for ducklings, etc.

Betsy Maestro and Ellen Delvecchio (reject stereotypes): Big city port.

Eve Rice (realistic characters with whom the children identify, lovely illustrations): Benny bakes a cake, New blue shoes, Ebbie, etc.

Millicent Salsam (good science): Is this a baby dinosaur?, Seeds and more seeds, etc.

Maurice Sendak (wonderful characterizations in artwork, wonderful language and imagination): Where the wild things are, Chicken soup with rice, Mr. Rabbit and the birthday present.

Dr. Seuss (wonderful rhyme and preposterous, loveable characters): Cat in the hat, ABC, Hop on Pop, Thidwick, etc. (Beware: Other than the works of Dr. Seuss, Elsa Minarek, and Arnold Lobel, beginning reading books tend to be cartoonish, sexist, and unimaginative.)

Judith Viorst (captures feelings and frustrations of being a child): Alexander and the terrible, horrible, no good, very bad day, etc.

Vera B. Williams (nonsexist): Three days on a river in a red canoe.

Taro Yashimi (young Japanese children, warm colors): Umbrella, Momo's kitten.

COMPREHENSIVE CLASSROOM BIBLIOGRAPHY

Please note:
"N" indicates a non sexist book
"**" indicates a popular book
"***" indicates a book so popular that multiple copies were needed

Ahlberg, Janet & Allen	Each peach pear plum	
Alexander, Martha	Maggie's moon	
	No ducks in our bathtub	
Ancona , George	I feel	
Arthur, Catherine	My sister's silent world	
Azarian, Mary	A farmer's alphabet	
Bang, Molly	Ten, nine, eight	N
Barnett, Judi	Animals should definitely not wear clothes	
	Animals should definitely not act like people	
Barton, Byron	Building a house	*
Benelmens, L.	Madeline's rescue	
Birdwell, Norman	Clifford and the grouchy neighbor	*
	Clifford's family	

Blegvad, Lenore	Anna Banana and me	
Blume, Judy	The pain and the great one	
Brenner, Barbara	Is it bigger than a sparrow	
Brown, Margaret Wise	Runaway bunny	
Burton, Virginia Lee	Mike Mulligan and his steam shovel	
	Katy and the big snow	*
	The little house	
Calhoun, Mary	Hot-air Henry	
Carle, Eric	The very hungry caterpillar	*
	The very busy spider	
Carrick, Carol & Donald	The pond	
Chazlea, Donald	Time to rhyme with Calico Cat	*
Charlip, Remy	Harlequin	
Chlad, Dorothy	When there is a fire, go outside	N *
	I'm telling you now	
Choreo, Kay	Molly's Moe	
Cohen, Miriam	No good in art	
Cooney, Barbara	Miss Rumphius	N *
de Paola, Tomie	Charlie needs a cloak	N
Dunn, Phoebe & Judy	The animals of Buttercup Farm	
Fisher, Aileen	Feathered ones and furry ones	
Flack, Marjorie	Ask Mr. Bear	
Freeman, Don	Corduroy	**
	A pocket for Corduroy	**
Fujikawa, Gyo	Fairy tales	
Gans, Roma	Birds eat and eat and eat	
Garelick, May	What makes a bird a bird?	
Gibbons, Gail	The seasons of Arnold's apple tree	N *
	Trucks	N
Hall, Derek	Elephant bathes	*
	Gorilla builds	*
Hankin, R.	I can be a firefighter	*
Himler, Donald	Wake up, Jeremiah	
Hoban, Tara	Count and see	
	Take another look	
	Over under & through	
	Is it larger? Is it smaller?	

	Bread and jam for Frances	
	I read symbols	
	Circles, triangles, and squares	
Hoberman, Mary Ann	A house is a house for me	
Hoffman, Mary	Elephant	
Hughes, S.	When we went to the park	N *
	Noisy	N *
	Alfie gets in first	*
	The bathwater's hot	N
Hutchins, Pat	Happy birthday Sam	
	You'll soon grow into them, Titch	
	Rosie's walk	
	One hunter	*
	Titch	*
Jones, Ann	Round trip	
Keats, Ezra Jack	The snowy day	*
	Regards to the Man on the Moon	
	Whistle for Willie	*
Kellogg, Steven	Much bigger than Martin	
	Can I keep him?	
Kent, Jack	Hop, skip, jump book	
Kesselman, Wendy	Emma	N
Krauss, Ruth	The carrot seed	
Lane, Margaret	The beaver	
Lasker, Joe	Nick joins in	N *
	He's my brother	
Lionni, Leo	Frederick	
Lobel, Arnold	On Market Street	*
	Frog and toad together	*
	Frog and toad are friends	*
Marzello, Jean	Close your eyes	
Matthiesen, Thomas	ABC: An alphabet book	
McCloskey, Robert	Blueberries for Sal	*
	One morning in Maine	
	Make way for ducklings	
Miller, Jane	Farm counting book	
Minarik, Else	No fighting, no biting	

Ormerod, Jan	Sunshine	
Oxenbury, Pat	Goodnight owl	
Random Picture Book	Wonders of nature	
	What do babies do?	
	The astronauts	N
	The little goat	
	The little lamb	
	The little puppy	
	The little kitten	
	The little duck	
Regniers, Beatrice	May I bring a friend?	
Rice, Eve	Benny bakes a cake	*
	New blue shoes	*
	Ebbie	
	Oh, Lewis	
Rockwell	My doctor	N
Ruffins, Reynold	My brother never feeds the cat	
Santrey, Louis	Spring	
	Summer	
	Winter	
Scary, Richard	Best word book ever	
Schlein, Miriam	I hate it	
Scholastic	Little whale	
Selsam, Millicent	Is this a baby dinosaur?	*
	Seeds and more seeds	
Sendak, Maurice	Chicken soup with rice	**
	Where the wild things are	**
	Mr. Rabbit and the birthday present	
Seuss, Dr.	Hop on pop	
	ABC	
Simon, Norma	How do I feel?	
	Why am I different?	
Spier, Peter	People	
	Bill's service station	
Tampert	Little fox goes to the end of the world	N
Viorst, Judith	Alexander and the terrible...(etc.)	**
Ward, Lynd	The biggest bear	

Williams, Barbara	If he's my brother	*
Winthrop, Elizabeth	Are you sad, Mama?	
Wylie, Joanne & David	A fishy color story	
Yashima, Taro	Momo's kitten	
	Umbrella	
Zolotow, Charlotte	But not Billy	
	Hold my hand	

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RESOURCES

The following supply houses were all used in acquiring materials for the program. Although their contents overlap, each has excellent materials unique to that catalogue. They are listed alphabetically.

ABC Schcol Supply, Inc.
6500 Peachtree Ind. Blvd.
P.O. Box 4750
Norcross, Georgia 30091
1-800-438-1638

The Able Child
525 W. 11th St.
New York, New York 10014

Childcraft Education Corp.
20 Kilmer Road
P.O. Box 3081
Edison, New Jersey 09918
1-800-631-5652
(Have puzzles which show men in nurturant roles)

A Child's Collection
611 Broadway, Room 708
New York, New York 10012
(Books, tapes, records, and book-related stuffed toys)

Chinaberry Book Service
3160 Ivy St.
San Diego, California 92104
1-619-284-0902
(Extensively annotated book and record list; emphasizes good literature that counters stereotypes)

Constructive Playthings
1227 E. 119th St.
Grandview, Missouri 64030

Environments, Inc.
P.O. Box 1348
Beaufort, South Carolina 29901
1-800-845-8248

Gryphon House Early Childhood Books
3706 Otis Street
P.O. Box 275
Mt. Rainier, Maryland 20712
1-800-638-0928

Holcomb's Educational Materials
P.O. Box 94636
Cleveland, Ohio 44101
1-800-362-9907
(Ask for early childhood as well as general catalogue)

Playfair, Inc.
1690 28th St.
Boulder, Colorado 80302
1-800-824-7255
(Some nonsexist materials)

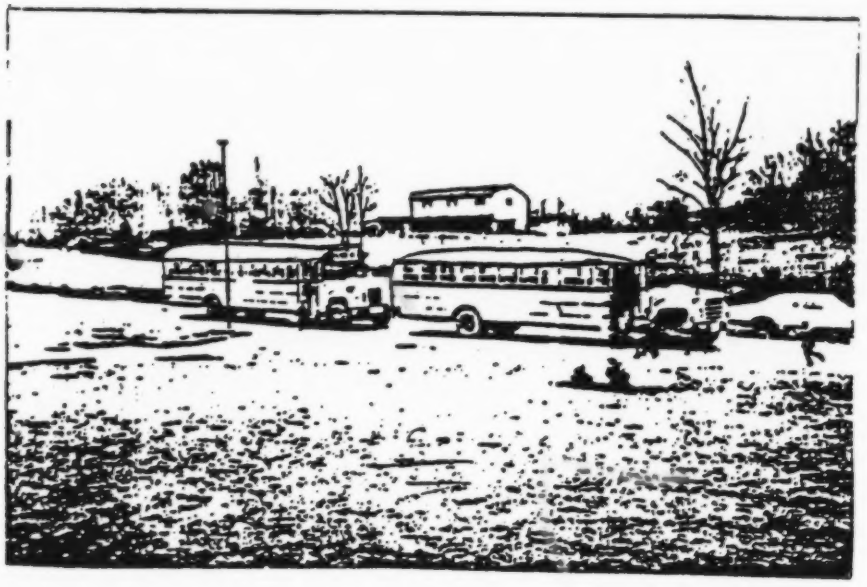
H.L. Strickling
55 W. Quackenbush Avenue
Dumont, New Jersey 07628
1-201-385-3772

Toys to Grow On
P.O. Box 17
Long Beach, California 90501
1-516-794-5340

Appendix A.

Kindergarten/Preschool Orientation Material

WELCOME TO
TRIMBLE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



TRIMBLE LOCAL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Parent/Student Handbook

Dear Parents:

Starting kindergarten is one of the most important experiences your child will have. This probably will be the first time he or she will be away from home for any length of time.

Kindergarten is a major event in the educational career of your child. He has already heard of the school, but this will be his first official contact with it. Almost everyone and everything will be new to him. Kindergarten will place your child in a social situation with other children his own age, and will provide him with an opportunity to assume responsibility. Your child will find himself in a situation which will stimulate his desire to learn.

I know you desire your child to grow and develop to his or her greatest capacity during the next year in kindergarten. It is my hope that this booklet will help you know better the requirements and purposes of kindergarten.

The first few days in kindergarten are important to the children, as they begin to adjust to the room, to their teacher, and to each other. It is best to allow each child to do this by himself. A parent's overconcern may upset a child. After the first month of school, parents are welcome to visit the classroom during classtime. I would like to know when you plan to come, ahead of time, so that there are not too many adults present on any one day.

The success of your child's educational career will depend in large part on the cooperation that exists between the home and the school. The cooperative effort must start with the kindergarten.

Sincerely,

Your Child's Kindergarten
Teacher

REQUIREMENTS FOR ADMISSION

Age: Most children entering kindergarten must be five years old before September 30th. Students who are exceptionally advanced - (social, physical, and intellectual factors are considered) may be recommended for early admission after testing by the school psychologist. A copy of the original birth certificate is required to establish the student's age.

Immunizations: State law requires that all children entering school must have completed the immunization and vaccinations prescribed for their age group. The law requires the following:

4 - DPT
3 - Oral Polio
1 - Measles, Rubella, and Mumps (At the age of 15 months or older)

The following is recommended:

5 - DPT
4 - Oral Polio
1 - Measles, Rubella and Mumps (At the age of 15 months or older)
1 - Tine Test

It is also advisable that your child be examined by a physician and a dentist before entering school. Children need to be in the best possible physical shape to obtain the maximum good from their schooling. Children can develop an ear or eye defect, which has not been noticed in the past. Uncorrected problems of this type can be a serious handicap to a beginning child.

Transfer students shall present a copy of the original certificate of birth as well as records from the school last attended.

The Kindergarten Child

Though as a group the five-year-olds are basically alike, each child is unique. Individual differences in personality, background, experiences, gifts, and limitations are becoming more evident. Each must be guided in the development of his individual potential.

Socially, the five-year-old is interested in playmates and is learning to get along with others and to conform to standards of social living. He is now ready to play and work in small groups and to share ideas and materials. He forms intense, short-lived friendships. He is interested in home and family and craves attention and recognition from adults as well as from other children to satisfy his basic needs for security and affection. He is interested in himself -- self-reliance and self-dependence are increasing, and self-criticism is appearing.

Intellectually, interest is strong in the why, the how, the here, and the now. The five-year-old is becoming increasingly interested in words, letters, quantity, time, and numbers, and is rapidly extending his vocabulary. He talks almost constantly, but is learning to listen. His thinking is factual and concrete, and he is developing skill in planning activities and in handling and solving problems. Curiosity is satisfied by observing, exploring, examining, and doing. He enjoys repetition and routine, and he needs the satisfaction of finishing what he starts.

Emotionally, he is slowly learning self-control. He is developing a sense of humor and is usually happy, although moods change rapidly. He fears new experiences, unless he is confident of his ability to cope with them. He wants and seeks adult help and guidance and is anxious for adult acceptance.

Physically, he is strenuously energetic. He climbs, jumps, runs, hops, and skips, living life at its active best. His action has direction and plan that it did not have at four. He is gaining control of his body; coordination of small muscles is beginning to develop, more slowly with boys than with girls. He is developing handedness and is usually farsighted. He is susceptible to colds and infectious disease and tires easily, but does not realize it. He must be provided with a balance of both quiet and active periods.

NO TWO FIVE-YEAR-OLDS ARE ALIKE! But all have special needs, including being accepted as a person, being loved, being wanted, feeling he belongs, receiving praise, sensing achievement, and having consistency in routine and discipline. Physically, we must remember that his large muscles are better developed than his small ones and that his vision is farsighted. Thus he is not ready for much near work (writing and reading).

THINGS YOUR CHILD WILL NEED

School Supplies

1. A jar of paste or 8 oz. Elmer's glue

2. Crayons: large, 8 basic colors

3. Box of kleenex

4. 2 large primary pencils

Miscellaneous

Please mark your child's coat, sweater, hat, etc., with his/her name to avoid mix-ups.

Dress your child in "work clothes" instead of "dress clothes" for school.

We do not have regular snacks, but children may bring in snacks for special occasions, such as birthdays. Please send enough for the whole class.

If you are going to pick up your child or have him/her ride a different bus or get off at a different house, PLEASE SEND A NOTE.

If your child has any health problems, such as allergies, etc., please let your child's teacher know about it.

If your child is absent, please send a note when he returns to school, stating why he/she was absent. It is important that children develop a good attendance pattern.

OBJECTIVES AND GOALS

Objectives

The kindergarten program contributes to the physical, social, intellectual, and emotional growth of the five-year-old in many planned ways. It meets the specific needs of each child as he learns to work on an individual basis and in a group setting.

Specific Observations

The kindergarten child is taught

1. To be cheerful and polite, and to work and play well with other children.
2. To share experiences, ideas, games, and tools with classmates.
3. To use verbal and nonverbal means to express ideas.
4. To develop the use of the large-body and small-body muscles by taking part in games, working with large building blocks, and playing outdoors and indoors, and in physical education classes.
5. To appreciate and love good books and to see his/her ideas and words written by his/her teacher.
6. To increase his/her independence by caring for himself/ herself and his/her belongings. To care properly for his/her clothes, toys, and school equipment, and for the property of the other children.
7. To develop self-control and good manners by learning to take turns, through listening and talking.
8. To act out and dramatize familiar stories.
9. To enjoy music through singing songs and participating in rhythms.
10. To express his/her own creative ideas in clay, paint, paper, blocks, and other materials.
11. To develop self-confidence and willingness to attack simple problems.
12. To learn to clean up and put away materials after his/her work and play.
13. To develop readiness for math and reading skills.

BASIC SKILLS

Children need certain basic skills before they can begin the real academic part of their education. We will emphasize and work to perfect these skills all through kindergarten. But you can make it easier for your child and his/her teacher if you begin these skills at home as soon as possible. The sooner your child has accomplished the basic skills, the sooner we can begin the more difficult readiness skills. Provided below is a list of these basic skills.

1. Identify and use body parts.
2. Run, jump, and hop.
3. Hold crayons and pencils appropriately.
4. Recognize and print first name.
5. Holds scissors appropriately and cuts.
6. Listen without interrupting (example: stories).
7. Follow one or two easy step directions.
8. Identify and name common objects.
9. Use singular and plural forms of words.
10. Speak in complete sentences.
11. Recognize and name: 8 basic colors, 4 basic shapes (circle, square, triangle, rectangle), and sizes (big, medium, small)
12. Identify objects that are the same or different.
13. Zip, tie, button, or snap own clothing.
14. Count objects to ten.

These skills are the basis of learning and need to be accomplished as soon as possible. They can very easily be emphasized in you and your child's everyday lives. If you can begin these skills at home, it will make school an easier and more pleasurable experience. If you have any questions, please feel free to call us.

OBJECTIVES AND GOALS

Objectives

The kindergarten program contributes to the physical, social, intellectual, and emotional growth of the five-year-old in many planned ways. It meets the specific needs of each child as he learns to work on an individual basis and in a group setting.

Specific Observations

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COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

DISEASES	COMMON EARLY SYMPTOMS	ISOLATION PERIOD	METHOD OF SPREADING
Chicken Pox	Skin rash with fever	Until 7 days from appearance of 1st vesicles	Secretion from the nose and throat of infected persons
Diptheria	Sore throat, croup, hoarseness, & fever	For a period of 14 days after onset	Discharges from the nose & throat of patient & carriers
German Measles	Skin rash, swollen glands at back of neck	No isolation required	Discharges from the nose & throat of patient
Mumps	Fever, painful swelling under jaw or front of ear	Until swelling of the salivary glands has disappeared & patient has clinically recovered.	Discharges from nose & throat of infected persons
Scarlet Fever	Vomiting, fever sore throat, rash	Until discharged from isolation requirements by health commissioner on advice of attending physician	Discharges from nose & throat of infected persons and carriers
Whooping Cough	Cold, cough, typical whoop begins about 14 days after onset	Until 2 days have elapsed following the occurrence of the last characteristic whoop	Discharges from the nose & throat of infected persons
Pink eye	Redness and Swelling of one or both eyes with a discharge	Until all discharges have stopped & eyes are clear	Use of common toilet articles such as wash clothes & towels
Measles	Fever, cough, watery eyes, running nose & rash	For 5 days after appearance of rash	Discharge from nose & throat of infected persons
Impetigo	Presence of blister like lesions which later develop into crusted pus-like plaques. Most common on face and hands, but sometimes widely scattered over the body	When all lesions have entirely healed	Personal contact with infected persons or infected person's things

A SICK CHILD CAN INFECT OTHERS AND SHOULD NOT BE IN SCHOOL FOR HIS SAFETY AND FOR THE SAFETY OF OTHERS. HE WILL BE SENT HOME IF HE COMES SICK.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

a b c d e f g h i

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A B C D E F G H I

J K L M N O P Q R

S T U V W X Y Z

PRESCHOOL QUESTIONNAIRE

Child's Name_____

Address_____

Name of parent(s) with legal custody_____

Phone_____ _____
(Home) Please list other numbers where we may contact you.

Please circle

Yes No I am willing to pay to send my child to preschool. If so, how much _____per week?

Yes No I can volunteer to assist with the preschool. If yes, please list the number of hours per week, the possible times, etc._____

_____

_____

Full day/half day is the length of program which I prefer/must have.

Yes No I am willing to participate in fund-raising activities to support the preschool program. If yes, how many hours of work per week?_____

You do not have to answer the following, but your response may help us in our efforts to secure funding for the preschool program.

Yes No Would the preschool program be an important factor in enabling you to work a job?

_____ Birth date of your preschool child.
_____ Number of younger children in your family.
_____ Number of older children in your family.
_____ Total number of people in your family.

Mother:_____ Occupation and places of employment for parent(s) with legal custody.
_____
_____

Father:_____
_____
_____
_____

Parent Comments:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

65

_____
Parent's Signature

PREKINDERGARTEN/KINDERGARTEN/NEW FIRST GRADE STUDENT
REGISTRATION FOR 1986-1987 SCHOOL YEAR

Registration for prekindergarten, kindergarten, and new first grade students will be held between 9:00 A.M. and 3:00 P.M. on Wednesday, April 9, at the Trimble Elementary School (Jacksonville). Since there is some possibility that we can continue with both of our prekindergarten programs, prekindergarten children of all ability levels should be brought for testing so that we can place them in the appropriate program.

To shorten the waiting lines, parents should come at the time indicated by the beginning letter in their last name:

Wednesday, April 9

9:00 A.M. - A	11:30 A.M. - O
9:15 A.M. - B & C	Noon Break (12:00-1:00 P.M.)
9:30 A.M. - D	1:00 P.M. - P & Q
9:45 A.M. - E	1:15 P.M. - R
10:00 A.M. - F & G	1:30 P.M. - S
10:15 A.M. - H	1:45 P.M. - T & U
10:30 A.M. - I & J	2:00 P.M. - V & W
10:45 A.M. - K	2:15 P.M. - X & Y
11:00 A.M. - L & M	2:30 P.M. - Z
11:15 A.M. - N	

Parents should bring their child, their child's birth certificate or other birth record, and immunization records. With the assistance of the Athens City-County Health Department and our local speech and hearing therapist, we plan to offer vision and speech screening for the children.

Except by the process of testing for early entrance, children must meet eligibility requirements and must be four years old by September 30, 1986, to enter prekindergarten, must be five years old by September 30, 1986, to enter kindergarten, and must be six years old by September 30, 1986, to enter first grade. Parents who cannot come on April 9 should phone the school at 767-2810 so that arrangements can be made for scheduling and enrolling their child in a class for next year.

Appendix B.

Behavior Observation Record

MODEL RURAL PRESCHOOL BEHAVIOR OBSERVATION RECORD

Area/Topic	First Third/Date	Second Third/Date	Third Third/Date
I. Social/Emotional Development			
How child interacts with others, (e.g., cooperation, leadership, initiation, flexibility, assertiveness, empathy)			
Emotional Development (e.g., handles frustration, separation, etc., well)			
Communication with other children and with teachers			
Ability to wait for turn			
Participation in group activities			
Comments relevant to this category			

II. General Cognitive Development

Problem-solving skills (forming hypotheses, testing ideas, evaluating outcomes)

Attention span

Self-initiative/ persistence

Independence (e.g., plays or works well alone)

Multiple use of materials (creativity)

Understanding of like/different

Can name common objects, colors, shapes, etc.

Comments relevant to this category

III. Communication Skills

EXPRESSIVE LANGUAGE
Language development/ sentence structure (Give examples of range of sentences used.)

Tells a story

Expresses ideas clearly:
to adults,
to children

Uses appropriate volume

RECEPTIVE LANGUAGE
Evidence receptive language is understood (e.g., understands directions) Give examples.

Listens when others speak

Contributes appropriate ideas in discussion

Comments relevant to this category

IVa. Book and Print Awareness

Interest in books

Book awareness, front/back, left/right, words/pictures, etc.

Recognize first name and other key words (e.g., key for that child)

Naming key letters and numerals (e.g., key for this child, for example, 'N' for Nathan)

Identifying like and different letters and numerals

Comments relevant to this category.

IVb. Comprehension

Answering questions about stories

Sequence familiar pictures

Identify and name familiar pictures

Illustrate a story

Comments relevant to this category.

V. Art and Music

Characteristics of art. (Attach a representative work of art.)

Uses range of media/ Explores media in diverse ways

Participates in singing and movement activities

Rhythmic expression/ repeat sound pattern

Recognize same/different sounds (high/low sounds, etc.)

Comments relevant to this category

VI. Mathematics Skills

1 to 1 correspondence

Classification and patterning (e.g., visual, sequential)

Rote Counting

Greater than and less than comparisons (e.g., size, number)

Comments relevant to this category

VII. Motor-Coordination Skills

Gross-motor skills (running, hopping, catching and throwing ball)

Fine-motor skills (e.g., cutting and tracing, working with pegs, working with nuts and bolts, stacking and balancing, assembling puzzles)

Printing name, letters, numerals

Comments relevant to this category

General Comments:

Appendix C.

Preschool Parent Questionnaire

PRESCHOOL PARENT QUESTIONNAIRE

As you may remember, the afternoon preschool program at Trimble this year was funded by a grant from the state of Ohio and was intended to serve as a model for the development of preschool programs in other rural school districts in the state. Before we formulate suggestions for developing other preschools, we would really like to know what you, the parents whose children were in the program, thought of the program, both good and bad.

Therefore, we would like to ask you to complete this brief questionnaire describing your views of the program. Please feel free to use the back of this form or another sheet of paper, if you need more room. Please be as open with us as you can be. We genuinely value your opinions. Thank you for taking your valuable time to complete this questionnaire.

1. Please tell us a few general things that you liked about the program.

2. Please tell us a few general things that you have disliked about the program. How could these problems be changed to improve the program?

3. What changes (good or bad) have you seen in your child since the program began? Give a few specific examples in each area if possible.

   A. How does your child get along with other children?

   B. How does your child handle his/her feelings?

C. What new things has your child learned?

D. What changes have you seen in the way she/he talks to others, and in the way he/she listens when others speak?

E. Has your child's interest in books changed?

F. Have you seen changes in your child's ability to recognize letters or words, or in his/her interest in reading?

H. Have you seen changes in the way your child spends her/his free time?

The activity which is the subject of this report was supported with funds provided by the Ohio Department of Education through a special grant award to the Trimble Local School District. However, the opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the Ohio Department of Education, and no official endorsement by this agency should be inferred.

For Additional Copies Write To:

The Ohio Department of Education
Division of Educational Services
Early Childhood Section
65 S. Front Street, Room 202
Columbus, Ohio 43266-0308

614-466-0224